

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE

**April 26, 2007
1:30 p.m., MST**

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met in Room 1 of the Arizona Senate Building, 1700 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. MST.

1. Call to Order

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman

Mr. Jim DiCello

Dr. Eugene Garcia

Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan

Ms. Johanna Haver

Ms. Eileen Klein

Ms. Karen Merritt

Ms. Anna Rosas

Absent:

Dr. John Baracy

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

2. Approval of March 14, 2007 minutes of Task Force meeting

Mr. Alan Maguire asked to hold the approval of the March 14, 2007 minutes to the next meeting.

3. Presentation and Discussion of the ELL Program Survey – February 2007

A summary document of the ELL Task Force Surveys was provided to the Task Force members on March 14, 2007. Presenting the analysis of the survey results were Dr. Suzy Seibert and Ms. Judy Boyer, consultants with Aha! Inc. Dr. Seibert thanked the survey participants on behalf of the Task Force, Arizona Department of Education (ADE), and Aha! Inc. for all of their time and effort spent completing the responses to the survey. She also thanked ADE for their assistance in the process, from the creation of the survey to sending the surveys and following up on responses.

Ms. Boyer presented the history behind the survey. In January 2007, Ms. Boyer presented the results of an analysis of the data compiled from presentations made by Arizona schools and school districts to the ELL Task Force since September 2006. Much

of her analysis focused on identification of and practices of schools that met three criteria: (1) K-5, at least 50% ELLs made progress; grades 6-8, at least 70% ELLs made progress; grades 9-12, at least 90% ELLs made progress; (2) at least 25% ELLs reclassified fluent English proficient in 2005-2006; (3) individual school (or 75% of schools within a school district) met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2005-2006. Only one of the 22 presenting schools and districts met all three criteria.

After a review of presentation data Chairman Maguire directed staff to identify and survey all Arizona schools that met the three criteria. At that time, Ms. Boyer told the Task Force that with the help of ADE, they were going to apply these same criteria to all the schools in the state to determine how many schools in the state met the three criteria. After the data was pulled, it was learned that 107 schools met these criteria. The ELL Planning Group designed a survey to ask detailed questions about the ELL programs of these schools.

Dr. Eugene Garcia asked if there were any limits on the number of ELL students in these schools that met the criteria. Dr. Seibert and Ms. Boyer answered that any school that met the three criteria was included in the survey process, without regard to the number of ELLs at that school. Ms. Boyer stated that the surveyed schools had all ranges of ELL populations, from high to low. She referred to Attachment A of the survey report that contained a copy of the blank survey and then discussed the survey. Question 1 of the survey asked for a general description of the ELL program. Some schools provided very detailed answers. Question 2a-2d asked respondents to break out the groupings of ELLs for their English Language Development (ELD) class and then asked for total number of minutes, numbers of ELL students in each classroom, number of teachers and other support personnel, and ELD formats used, including curricular, instructional, and programmatic materials. Dr. Garcia asked if the survey asked about teacher credentials. Dr. Seibert replied that the survey had not addressed this question. Question 3 asked about non-ELD classes (content area classes such as math and science) and the grouping and class size. Question 4 asked about assessments and monitoring of ELL students, and Question 5 asked respondents to describe other ELL programs at the school, including interventions and tutoring. Question 6 asked about professional development and training provided to educators. The last question asked schools to describe their best practices resulting in the achievement of English language proficiency by ELL students.

In order to present the survey response information to the Task Force in binder form, Ms. Boyer condensed the responses into a matrix format, using original quotes when possible and summarizing replies when the original response was too lengthy. The Aha! team used this matrix format to compare responses and analyze the data for their summary report, "Results of Arizona Schools Survey" (Attachment A).

Of the 107 surveys that were sent, 88 surveys were returned, an 82% return. The completed surveys represented 34 school districts, including five elementary school districts, 1 union high school district, and 28 unified school districts. Dr. Garcia asked how many schools were in the state. To answer this question, Mr. Micky Gutier of the

Office of English Language Acquisition Services provided statistics from ADE that Ms. Boyer read to the Task Force. There are 238 school districts in the state, consisting of 1,543 schools. There are 360 charter holders in the state, which have 466 charter schools. The total number of all districts, charter holders, schools and charter schools in Arizona is 2,607. Of the 88 schools responding, 25 schools had more than 50 ELL students, while 63 had fewer than 50 ELL students. A school with approximately 50 ELL students was considered to have a medium population of ELLs. Table 3 showed the list of all schools responding and their ELL population. Ms. Boyer continued to describe the demographics of the survey respondents, stating that over half of the responses were from elementary schools of grades K-5. Included in this number was a K-6 school that did not have any ELL students in 6th grade, and also a K-3 school. One of the middle schools had only 7th and 8th grades. Ms. Boyer stated that there was a limitation in the study because other schools in the state may have had a reclassification rate of 50% or higher, but if they did not meet the other two criteria, they were not included in the study.

Dr. Seibert shared the findings from the surveys. The data from the surveys was descriptive and was categorized in the findings. Dr. Seibert reminded the Task Force that the schools represented in the survey had the highest progress and reclassification in the state according to the criteria. Dr. Garcia asked for the definition of ELLs making progress. Mr. Gutier explained that if a student moved up a level of proficiency in any of the subsets of AZELLA, the student was considered to be making progress.

The first set of questions asked about the general structure of the ELL program including grouping strategies and the structure of the ELD classes. Of the 88 schools in the survey, 41 indicated that they grouped their ELLs within mainstream classes for ELD. Dr. Seibert read a few quotes not included in the survey report to illustrate this point: "Currently, 100% of all ELL students are enrolled in inclusive classrooms. There is one English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsed teacher who teaches English at the 7th to 12th grades levels and offers a pullout program for five students at the 5th and 6th grade levels.... All curriculum, instruction, and programmatic materials for ELL students are the same as non-ELL students enrolled in the district. This includes interventions for at risk language arts students."

Dr. Seibert stated that there appears to be confusion on what constitutes an ELD class. What stood out was that 41 of the 88 schools or 46.6% had grouped ELLs with non-ELLs. She read a quote from one of the respondents: "Students are not placed in specific ELL classrooms. All students are placed in SEI classrooms with non-ELL peers and a certified teacher. ELL students are mainstreamed in SEI classrooms and not placed in specific ELD classrooms."

In the survey, ELD was defined as having four components: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. Of 88 schools, 25 provided a breakout of time spent learning each component of ELD. The total average was 132 minutes or 2.2 hours, slightly more than half of the ELD minutes now required by law. Sixty-eight schools provided a breakout of ELD instruction by proficiency level of ELLs as determined by AZELLA. Pre-

Emergent and Emergent received about two hours of ELD instruction daily, while Basic and Intermediate ELLs received a reported 106 minutes daily. Ms. Karen Merritt brought up the point that it was likely not all the ELLs in the survey were first year ELLs. Dr. Seibert confirmed that the survey did not make a distinction for first year ELLs. The data also seemed to indicate a smaller class size, although this was difficult to verify in cases where ELLs were taught in mainstream classrooms. There seemed to be some confusion about what constituted ELD. One school reported the number of minutes for SEI Language Arts and then reported three times that number of minutes per day of sheltered instruction in the mainstream content classroom and stated that language objectives were taught along with content objectives in each lesson. Therefore, the total number of ELD minutes was reported as significantly greater than would be identified if a strict ELD definition were used. Ms. Boyer reviewed with the Task Force the definition that was listed in the survey.

Dr. Seibert discussed Table 7 that showed the location where students were taught ELD. She discussed the responses to Question 3 concerning non-ELD classroom strategies and groupings, under tables 8 and 9 in the survey report, and the assessments used as part of the ELL program under table 10. She shared a comment about AZELLA from a school that assesses students biannually in AZELLA. The school included in its services transitional ELL for students who had tested composite proficient in AZELLA but had not been proficient in all of the AZELLA subtests. Dr. Garcia asked if the law prohibits this. Dr. Seibert replied that the law says to transfer English proficient students into mainstream English classrooms.

Included in the findings were some suggestions of other programs available to ELL students, including giving parents a choice in models or having an ELL magnet school in a district which has a smaller ELL student population. Dr. Seibert shared ideas from the professional development and best practices sections of the survey. Dr. Garcia asked what kinds of data the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments provide. Ms. Debbie Ortiz, Director of Language and Literacy with Phoenix Elementary Schools, stated that DIBELS helps with phonemic awareness and word recognition, but is not as helpful in showing comprehension.

Dr. Seibert presented a final table which Ms. Boyer had developed that showed the schools that had achieved a 50% or higher reclassification rate in the 2005-2006 school year. Only 15 of the 88 responding schools had a 50% or greater reclassification rate. Of these schools, none had a high ELL population; the number of ELLs ranged from 2 to 35 per school.

Four major observations and/or implications were drawn from the analysis of the survey responses. These included a need to translate the Arizona ELL Proficiency Standards into a detailed curricular level, the need for placement of ELLs in the correct type of English speaking classroom, the need for clarification of the minimum of four hours per day of ELD, and the need for a *short* temporary transition to English proficiency. Many schools use published programs to drive daily ELD instruction. The alignment of these

publishers' programs to the Arizona K-12 ELL Proficiency Standards is unknown. It was suggested that alignment studies be done to determine this alignment. The definition of the SEI classroom also needs to be clear. Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan stated that the classroom must be defined based on the student, not on the teacher or the teacher's endorsement. Because of the confusion in defining what an SEI classroom encompasses, she stated that earlier cost effective studies had been invalid. Dr. Garcia asked if this definition is in the law. Ms. Garcia Dugan stated that it is. Dr. Seibert agreed.

Ms. Eileen Klein asked about the process of the creation of the survey and its purpose. Dr. Seibert explained that after the first matrix of the 22 presentations was created, Mr. Maguire asked for the information to be synthesized into some basic analysis. Mr. Maguire added that the sample at the time had been random and non-scientific. The data had been standardized for comparison. This survey embodied a more structured approach, building on data from the first summary. A survey of schools with the highest reclassification and ELL progress would show current practices and the Task Force could determine if information on current practices was useful. The surveys were intended to provide descriptive information.

Dr. Garcia noted that there wasn't data on what exactly was covered in the standards, so no statements could be made about whether or not current curriculums addressed all the standards. Dr. Seibert stated that because many respondents were unable to segment reading, writing, listening and speaking into discrete time periods, it is likely that skills are not being taught in a discrete manner. Dr. Garcia said he agreed with the statement that the alignment between published programs and the Arizona ELL Proficiency Standards was unknown. Dr. Garcia also pointed out that under the second observation, it was possible, under some interpretations of the law, for content area classes to include an ELL student in some SEI and in some mainstream classes. Dr. Seibert said it was still important to have a clear definition and to place ELL students in the correct classroom. She also thought it should be a Task Force decision to determine what kind of credentials teachers of ELL students should have. In addition, the data shows that even this top tier of schools is not reclassifying students quickly enough to meet the law's requirement of "not normally to exceed one year."

Dr. Garcia asked about SEI classes and if an ELL student could have some SEI and non-SEI classes. Dr. Seibert said that in the strictest reading of the law, the answer was no, and that students would be in SEI classrooms for the full day. Ms. Garcia Dugan agreed, stating that after the four hours of ELD, an ELL student might be in a sheltered math or science class. Ms. Anna Rosas stated that schools and districts were likely waiting for a definition of these from the ELL Task Force.

Ms. Klein asked for the definition of ELD, as the law is silent. Dr. Seibert replied that her definition was based on work with Chairman Maguire and work that has been done with the Task Force, aligning the definition of ELD to the ELL Proficiency Standards. Mr. Maguire commented that he saw an implicit plea for guidance in the findings. Dr. Garcia stated that any definition of ELD away from the ELL Proficiency Standards

makes the entire model fall apart. Dr. Seibert and Ms. Boyer agreed that the definition had to be tied to the standards. Dr. Garcia agreed schools were not having the results required to attain proficiency in a year, but the study did not indicate what would provide that result. Dr. Seibert said only Arizona has this kind of law that is so prescriptive; therefore, we are the experiment, and other states will likely be observing the results. Ms. Johanna Haver commented the grouping was vital to the program; she didn't see how it was possible to teach a pre-emergent or emergent ELL and a native English speaker effectively in the same classroom.

Ms. Merritt asked for clarification of what effect AZELLA will have on rates of reclassification. She wondered if a sentence should be added to address this possible change in assessment. Dr. Seibert said that the AZELLA was more closely aligned to the Arizona K-12 ELL Proficiency and Arizona Academic Language Arts Standards than previous assessments had been. Dr. Garcia asked if conclusions should be drawn about smaller class sizes. Dr. Seibert stated that she needed more data to support that. Dr. Garcia asked that Dr. Seibert and Ms. Boyer gather a sample of responding schools to ask about their class sizes and teacher credentials.

Mr. DiCello asked about the observation regarding curriculums. He suggested offering funding for schools to have alignment studies done, rather than having the Task Force take on the responsibility of endorsing them. Dr. Seibert stated she would remove the word "endorse."

Dr. Garcia asked for some time to further review the data and to have the revisions presented to the Task Force at a later date. Mr. Maguire thanked the schools for their detailed responses. He also thanked ADE for their help in the survey process.

A break was called at 3:40 p.m.

4. Presentation and Discussion of the Development of English Language Learner Models' Components

Mr. Clark reviewed his process and stated that his work is based on the four components of the law previously discussed, working within that perimeter. Unless he is directed by the Task Force to do otherwise, he will continue on this path, references to other research notwithstanding. He referred to the updated handout pages, which were either new or edited, entitled "Program Model Rationale," "Discrete Skills Sequence," and "Elementary Model." On the first page, the document addressed Dr. Baracy and Dr. Garcia's questions about the research addressing time allocation.

Mr. Clark discussed the Elementary Model, illustrating the time allocation breakdown of various English language skills. Ms. Karen Merritt asked when "Year One" for an ELL student would begin under this program. Mr. Clark replied that since the model has not yet been implemented, the first year will begin when the model is implemented. Ms. Merritt commented that one challenge for the Task Force will be to help schools with

smaller ELL populations implement this model. Mr. Clark said that he was working on an exercise to help demonstrate how the model will look at different schools.

Mr. Clark reviewed the Program Model Rationale. This document identifies four courses to be taught to ELLs: Conversational English and Academic Vocabulary, English Reading, English Writing, and English Grammar, all measured on AZELLA. The chart shows that each of these four content areas are 20-40% of the ELL Proficiency standards, depending upon the grade and level of proficiency of the ELL student. The document stated research conclusions that supported the recommended division of the mandated four hours of ELD and cited the research base. The final row of the document provided the recommended time allocation per grade span for each of the four courses. The research is well-cited, supporting the teaching of discrete skills taken from the Arizona ELL Proficiency Standards. This is from empirical studies, quasi-experimental or experimental research where there was a control group. A synthesis of the model is the policy plus the principles plus the structure. The graph attempts to unify these three elements of the model. Ms. Merritt asked if the research dictated the exact time-allocation. Mr. Clark said no, that the time is based on the frequency that the discrete skills are found in the ELL Proficiency Standards. The research supports the model's reliance on time allocations. Mr. Alan Maguire stated that the chart was helpful in that it builds a solid foundation for making time allocations for the four hours dictated by the statute.

5. Presentation and Discussion of Upcoming Task Force Activities

Mr. Alan Maguire stated that Mr. Clark would continue his activities in the creation of the model at the next Task Force meeting.

6. Presentation of "Fundamental Principles in Quality English Language Learner Programs"

Dr. Robert I. Donofrio, Executive Director for University-School Partnerships at ASU, thanked the Task Force for their efforts in constructing models. He stated that he was representing the ELL Community of Practice group. He expressed that the law was ill-conceived in a group of laws concerning immigration issues. He stated that schools need to operate as a learning organization. The first document presented was a policy brief that had been sent to the Task Force before their first official meeting, entitled "Educating Arizona's English Language Learners" (Attachment B). He hoped that the Task Force will revisit the document, discuss and debate it, and use it in the development of the ELL program models. He referred to the second article in the handout, "Fundamental Principles in Quality English Language Learner Programs," citing that the article held non-negotiable principles the Task Force should consider in constructing their models.

He stated that he represents schools and districts that comprise 25% of Arizona's ELL population, or one in four ELL students in the state. He stated that there was room to

interpret the law, or that some would work to change the law. He highlighted some of the article's points, including that research shows the majority of ELL students starting at the most basic levels of proficiency take 3-7 years to reach a level of academic English proficiency where they can participate and benefit from English instruction and assessment geared for English-speaking students. There is a great deal of variation among ELLs who attend Arizona public schools, including rural and urban settings, previous exposure to English, and exposure to English in their communities. The article recommended 90 minutes of ELD with a maximum class size of 15 and credentialed teachers trained in ELD. There should be access to a variety of supplements to the regular day including before and after school programs and summer school.

Dr. Donofrio was hopeful that the Task Force would develop multiple models, not a single model. He said practices should differ between primary grades and higher grades. English teaching programs such as SIOP are geared to ELLs at the intermediate level and above only, not all proficiency levels. There is a need for well-trained teachers across all grade levels, instructional assistants and coaches with extensive SEI training. He stated that bilingual education did not fail, but that the system failed to provide adequate teacher training and other support for bilingual education. He stated that "making sure ELLs achieve academically during and after spending time in programs designed to help them develop English and learn academic content while they are learning English" would cost the state more than it is currently spending on ELL education. He referred to three cost studies including Nogales, Glendale Union and Murphy.

Dr. Donofrio said that in the end the Task Force must make recommendations that are eagerly awaited, and that hopefully they will listen to the collective wisdom of the many, and not the few.

Mr. Jim DiCello asked about the 90 minute recommendation, asking the source of the research. Dr. Donofrio said the research indicated that a whole language program can't be parceled out; a block of time is needed to integrate the many components. His group stated ninety minutes was sufficient. Murphy used a two hour block. Dr. Donofrio stated that, in addition, the research showed greater achievement in a classroom of fifteen students or fewer. This applied for all students, ELL or not. Mr. DiCello asked if the Community of Practice was an association or lobbying group. Dr. Donofrio answered that they are a group of people with the responsibility of implementing ELL programs. This is the same group who helped provide the speakers from the three universities in a previous ELL Task Force meeting. Dr. Eugene Garcia asked Dr. Donofrio to describe who comprises the collective experience. Dr. Donofrio said that the most talented members have twenty to thirty years experience, representing ten to eleven districts, including Cartwright, Murphy, Mesa Unified, and Phoenix Union.

Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan asked if Dr. Donofrio was making a distinction between language proficiency and academic proficiency in his statements that academic proficiency could not be gained in one or two years. Dr. Donofrio replied that he didn't know how one could make a difference. Conversational Spanish, for example, is not

necessarily an academic level of Spanish. Ms. Garcia Dugan stated there are native English speakers who are not able to pass the academic language portion of AIMS, and that this is an academic issue, not a language proficiency issue, and that ELLs can also have this academic issue and still be proficient in English. She stated the law is looking for language proficiency, and at that point students are ready for mainstream education to attain academic proficiency. Both laws make a distinction between these two proficiencies. Dr. Donofrio stated that the research showed that it takes three years for academic proficiency. Dr. Garcia stated that one can't measure language without a component of academic content. He agreed with Ms. Garcia Dugan that a student can be English proficient and still require help in academic proficiency. Ms. Garcia Dugan expressed that students should not be held back in a program if their language proficiency is adequate to enable academic content learning.

7. Call to the Public

Mr. Alan Maguire made a call to the public at 4:10 p.m. There were no public speakers.

8. Discussion of future meetings

The next Task Force meeting will be on May 3rd at 1:30 p.m.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m. without objection. The motion was made by Mr. Jim DiCello and seconded by Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan.

Alan Maguire, Chairman

August 15, 2007